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ABSTRACT

Conservation education, outdoor education, and environmental education all have as a common goal the understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Outdoor education is a method of teaching wherein established disciplines, topics, and concepts which can best be taught outdoors are taught outdoors. Conservation education is the study of man's intelligent use of his natural environment through the development, management, preservation, and renewal of natural resources for his material, cultural, and aesthetic needs to benefit present and future generations. Environmental education, the study of all things surrounding man which affect his existence, is aimed at developing an informed citizenry motivated to the recognition of problems and to collective action for solution. The increase in urban populations and the lack of understanding of modern Americans for their environmental heritage make it imperative that a program in education deal with this heritage in relevant terms. The Conservation Education Association urges that the philosophy and terminology of educators in these 3 fields be explained and clarified and that organizations with these philosophies agree on their objectives and decide on a terminology which clearly reflects these objectives. (JH)

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DEFINITION: CONSERVATION EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Conservation education, outdoor education and environmental education all have a common goal: understanding and appreciating the natural world. This common bond provides a focal point for each of the philosophies and causes some to consider the three terms synonomous.

Traditionally, outdoor education and conservation education have maintained their emphasis on the out-of-doors but with a growing body of followers in each area. Outdoor education and conservation education have both been common to education in some parts of the country since the turn of the century.

Outdoor education has been characterized by innovative teaching in the outdoors including field trips, day-use of natural areas and youth camping to extend the curriculum outside the classroom. Most programs have a strong emphasis on health, physical education and recreation as well as nature study, usually in the upper elementary grades.

Conservation education has been characterized by an emphasis on basic natural resources (soil, water, minerals, animals, plants, and recently, air) and their use, management, development and preservation to serve the needs of man. The greatest impact has been made in rural areas where natural resources were a primary part of the economy and where management caused immediate effect. The teaching of conservation has occurred in all grade levels with the greatest effort in units taught in biology, geography and agriculture. Special courses in conservation are common in some areas.

For many years enlightened conservationists have been attempting to broaden the concept of conservation to include the interrelationships of man with his resources as well as the concepts of secondary use, processing, re-use and planning. These concepts have become an integral part of recent conservation texts. However, a traditional understanding of the word "conservation" has made

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it difficult to broaden understanding. In many areas conservation is "hunting and fishing," in others it is "minerals management" while in still others it connotes "soil and water conservation."

In recent years some conservationists have sought a terminology which would allow them to teach their broadened philosophy of man-centered relationships regarding resources and their uses. "Resource-use" became popular in the late '50s and early '60s, but the word "conservation" was still in broad use.

In the late '60s the tremendous increase in technology had caused such evident change in our countrysides that men of all disciplines, ecologists, engineers, politicians, educators, and laymen, almost simultaneously started to speak out about the crisis of our environment. Thus, a term denoting natural and cultural resource concern in urban as well as rural areas was born. And with it an even broader approach to man's understanding of the land. An approach which focused on the problems of the environment and their solution on an individual and community basis.

The discussion group at the CEA Conference in Lafayette, La. acknowledges the similarities in the three philosophies; outdoor, environmental and conservation education, appreciates the contribution that each will make as a separate area of education concern, and feels that much coordinated and cooperative education can be accomplished where these philosophies overlap.

The characteristics of each of the philosophies help give direction to the definitions which follow:

Philosophy	Characteristics
Outdoor Education	1. Education outdoors 2. A teaching method
Conservation Education	1. Resource oriented 2. Technology, management and treatment 3. Rural and small town 4. Science centered

Environmental Education

1. Problem oriented (waste and degradation)
2. Urban and community (where people live)
3. Political - citizen action
4. Spans the curriculum

Based on discussion and the characteristics of each of the philosophies the following definitions were developed:

OUTDOOR EDUCATION - A method of teaching wherein established disciplines, topics and understandings which can best be taught outdoors are taught outdoors. (Note: this philosophy of outdoor education is well established with a large professional following and body of literature. We feel no competence to try to improve on their established philosophy definition)

CONSERVATION EDUCATION - Conservation education is the study of man's intelligent use of his natural environment through the development, management, preservation, and renewal of natural resources for his material, cultural, and aesthetic needs to benefit present and future generations.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION - Environmental education is the study of all things surrounding man which affect his existence and is aimed at developing an informed citizenry, motivated to the recognition of problems and to collective action for solution.

The preparation of citizens in all walks of life, both rural and urban to make decisions necessary to solve problems dealing with the quality of our environment should be the ultimate goal of any national policy on education dealing with man and his natural and cultural birthright. The great increase in urban populations,

the shift from rural to urban areas and the lack of understanding of modern Americans for their environmental heritage makes it imperative that a program in education deal with this heritage in relavent terms.

We, therefore, urge that the philosophy and terminology of educators in the fields of Outdoor Education, Conservation Education, and Environmental Education be explained and clarified and that organizations with these philosophies agree on their objectives and decide on a terminology which clearly reflects these objectives.

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